The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke*

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THE FLAG GOES BY

HATS off!
Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,
A flash of color beneath the sky—
Hats off!
The flag is passing by.

Blue and crimson and white it shines
Over the steel-tipped, ordered lines.
Hats off!
The colors before us fly;
But more than the flag is passing by.

Sea fights and land fights, grim and great,
Fought to make and to save the State;
Weary marches and sinking ships,
Cheers of victory on dying lips;

Days of plenty and years of peace;
March of a strong land's swift increase;
Equal justice, right, and law;
Stately honor and reverent awe;

Sign of a nation great and strong
To ward her people from foreign wrong;
Pride and glory and honor—all
Live in the colors, to stand or fall.
Hats off!
Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,
And loyal hearts are beating high.
Hats off!
The flag is passing by!

—*Henry Holcomb Bennett.*

TIRED OF SCHOOL

TOMMY'S idea of the kind of school he would most enjoy would be a place where he could attend at recess and be excused from all the study and recitation hours. He likes the companionship of the boys and girls. He respects and even in his secret heart admires his teacher. But school really means to him—at least on the surface of his thought—a lot of misspent time in study sweetened by some happy times of play. Were he to tell you what he thinks he would say that he is tired of school. For school is more or less repression and he likes above all things to let himself go.

Quite different, at the first glance, you might be inclined to think, is the case of Tommy's aunt. She is old enough to be painfully aware of her infirmities. She has trials which severely tax her patience and her ingenuity. Sometimes she thinks that fate, or Providence (it depends a little on her mood which word she chooses) slams all doors of opportunity in her face. Sometimes in these moments of exasperation she says to herself that she is tired of living. She said that to me once when we happened to be associated in a common experience of misfortune. I was exasperated myself, but I managed to invent a laugh and tell her that she was just like Tommy, she was tired of school.

In order to understand the exact condition in these weary, discouraged and often exasperated moments we must accept for the basis of our thinking the fact that our life really is a school—a place of learning, a place where the lessons are set for us, by a teacher wiser than ourselves, with no elective system which permits us to take the courses which we like. And one may learn in very shabby and uncomfortable places. We need not be as far back in the evolutionary scheme as Tommy, who stands, or seems to stand, for the moment, in the puppy stage, where he would like no learning except that which comes unconsciously through play. But, on the other hand, it would be foolish to deny that play is one of the great teachers. Nor must we expect as scholars to understand all the methods and experiences of the school.

The important lesson is that we should accept,

once and for all, joyfully if we can, resignedly if we must, the truth that life is a school and that when we suffer ourselves to be weary of life we are tiring of our education.

If you were the only scholar for whom these experiences of the school were made, they would have one kind of meaning. But everybody knows that much of the teaching (some say, most) comes from the other scholars. I like to watch the streets as the school bell is ringing and to see the boys and girls go laughing and chattering to school. It brings a thrill to meet them at recess time as they pour out to freedom, lunch and play. There is hardly any time in life so full of companionships, so rich in sharing. And so there is a much larger and more social meaning in those experiences of life of which we sometimes weary. There is no private tutor who can teach us the whole of life. For that we must have full classes and the crowd. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," you tell me. Yes, but if the heart were all alone, its loneliness would be the bitterest experience of all that weighed upon it.

In this respect Christianity seems to me by far the most human of all earth's religions. If it represents this world as a school, it also shows us our great teacher as a scholar and graduate of that school of grief and pain and weariness. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews probed deep into the necessities of our human experience and gave the right clue to our learning when he said of Christ: "Though He were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."

Yet, after all, we need Tommy's love for play for our completion of the full idea of school. We have learned in long experience that recess is one of the more important elements in the plan of teaching. We do not wish the scholars to take their lessons with them to the playground. A good teacher would be disturbed if he saw his boys gathering daily in groups on the playground to discuss problems in arithmetic or dates of history. Play time is for play, just as night is for sleep. Religion is for all the times of life, but not a tyranny or monotony for every hour. It is not piety to take our problems to bed with us.

The trouble with Tommy's aunt is that she is impatient with the school and wants to get the lessons over so that she can go home to rest or play. This impatience is a serious impediment to the rest of heart which comes of confidence in God. It takes for granted that we have already arrived at learning, have been disciplined complete, are the best judges in our own case and need no more the experience of the school. And anyone who has that opinion of himself certainly needs to be set back for a while into the kindergarten class for the study of humility.

We shall be wise if we, as scholars in God's school, somehow contrive to rid ourselves of the thought of earth as a finality. It is a good place, a place with opportunity for many enjoyments and partial, momentary refreshments. While it is our home we must somehow learn to get the best out of both our trials and our joys. We must do the work of the classroom; and we should throw ourselves into the enjoyments of the playground. A Christian must not idle; but neither should he mope. In that overstress of self and self-indulgence we put back the processes of God on our behalf and set a poor example to our fellow learners of the school.

I find fault with many of our hymn books here. Some of them at least have far too many of those gaze-out-at-the-window-when-you-ought-to-be-thinking-of-the-lesson hymns, hymns that cater to our weariness of school. It needs a manly mood and tone to write or sing a hymn of longing for the heaven and home which await us, without weakening our courage for the present work on earth. And heaven is a state of the soul—of confidence and courage and patient endurance in the place where we are sent. These are a part of our work as scholars in the school that God has set for our learning. I do not say that the lessons which are set are always easy or that the hours are never long. But we have good assurance that these are lessons set for our learning, and that our heavenly Father intends to bring us home at last.—"*Saturday Night Thoughts,*" *in the Boston Transcript.*

GREEN THINGS GROWING

Oh, the green things growing,
The green things growing,
The faint, sweet smell of the green things growing!
I should like to live
Whether I smile or grieve,
Just to watch the happy life of my green things growing!

Oh, the fluttering and the pattering
Of those green things growing!
How they talk, each to each, when none of us are knowing,
In the wonderful white
Of the weird moonlight,
As the dim, dreamy dawn when the cocks are crowing!

And in the rich store
Of their blossoms glowing
Ten for one I take they 're on me bestowing.
Oh, I should like to see,
If God's will it may be,
Many, many a summer of my green things growing!

—*Dinah Maria Mulock Craik.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass. Tel. Granite 1140

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send those to the Book Club to be printed here.

SPECIAL NOTICES

It will greatly aid those who are sending books, magazines, cards, and so forth, if all our correspondents who send requests for their children will take pains to mention their names and ages. Lacking such information, one is likely to make mistakes; for a boy of twelve and a girl of seven are not usually interested in the same things.

When requesting books for the first time, correspondents should always give, as reference, the name and address of their clergyman.

When correspondents move to a new address, notice should be sent either to our headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or to those persons who have been sending books and magazines.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word. We do not undertake to send correspondents money, clothing or household goods. Letters asking for that sort of assistance cannot receive attention. Letters not signed cannot be printed.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

OFFERS

For following books apply to Mrs. William M. Brown, 136 Union Street, Montclair, N. J.

She will be glad to send a box to any school or library that will pay the freight.

Strive and Succeed: H. Alger, Jr.
First at the North Pole: Stratemeyer
Deerfoot on the Prairies: Ellis
Airship Andy: Webster
The Red Mustang: W. O. Stoddard
The Oklahoma Scout: Baughmann
The Quartet: Stoddart
Bob Kinzer: Stoddart
The Boat Club: Stoddart
Charlie Codman's Cruise: Alger
At the Fall of Port Arthur: Stratemeyer
Dreadnought Boys aboard a Destroyer: Lawton
Frank's Campaign: Alger
Tin Box: Alger
A Boy's Race with General Grant: E. McCormick
The Rover Boys Out West: Winfield
Down the River
The Phantom Auto: Ellis
Deerfoot in the Forest: Ellis
The Wreck of the Red Bird: Eggleston
The Boy Aviator's Treasure-Quest: Lawton
Rollo in Holland: Jacob Abbott
The Boy with the U. S. Foresters: Wheeler
Black Beauty: Anna Sewell
Testimony of the Rocks: Hugh Miller
First Impressions of England and Its People: H. Miller
Manfred
Poems of Jean Ingelow
Poems of Robert Browning
From Day to Day with Shakespeare
Ivanhoe: Scott
Talisman: Scott
Last of the Mohicans: Cooper
Tom Brown at Oxford
Elsie's Girlhood: Finley
Swiss Family Robinson
Fast Friends: Trowbridge
Spinning-Wheel Stories: Alcott
Heidi: Spyri
The Beatitudes
Our Burden-Bearer
Book of Birthday Wishes
With Christ
The Day is Done: Longfellow
A Tale of a Bold Bad Mouse: Aris
Foxey Brush-Tail: Cash
Little Sinbad the Sailor: Aris
Scout Quack and Dolly Dutch: Haldy
Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck: Potter
Auntie's Little Rhyme Book
The Cozy Lion: Burnett
Sunny Bunny: Putnam
Eddie Elephant: Gruelle
Little Babs: Mitchell
The Bam-Bam Clock: McEvoy
The Little Small Red Hen
Once Upon a Time: Burnett
Andy Merrigan's Great Discovery: Allen
Alexander-Dewey Arithmetic

Graded Lessons in Arithmetic
Grammar School Arithmetic
Advanced Arithmetic
Vocational Mathematics for Girls
Algebra for Colleges and Schools
Children of the New Forest: Marryat
By England's Aid: G. A. Henty
The Barbadoes Girl
Helen's Babies: Habberton
Greenloch Girls at Camp West: Remick
Petromela: Meade
Top-of-the-World Stories: Poulsson
Topical Textbook: R. A. Torrey
An Agitator: Black
Manual of Christian Doctrine
Preparation for the Holy Communion
Coming to Communion
Index to the Bible
Bible Study by Books: N. T. Sell, D. D.
Christian Evidences
The Light of the World: Speer
Dictionary
Reading Recitations
Fourth Reader
Graded Literature: Third book
Plants and Their Children: Dana
Composition and Rhetoric
The Morse Speller
Pronouncing Handbook of Words
Book of Common Prayer
The Psalms
Studies in the Life of Christ
Episcopal Common Praise (music and words)
Responsive Service of Worship
Gospel Choir
Hymnal for Schools
Hymnals (7)
Essays: Emerson
The Stickit Minister: Crockett
Introduction to the Middle Ages: Emerton
The Heart of the Ancient Wood: Roberts
A Kentucky Cardinal: J. L. Allen
Romola: George Eliot
Reign of Law: Allen
Life of William McKinley: Porter
Quisante: Anthony Hope
Guide to Bible Study: Richards(five copies)
The Lure of Life: Castle
Isabel Carnaby: Fowler
Four-Oakes: Thorpe
My Enemy, the Motor: Street
She: Rider Haggard
As We Saw It In '90: Sheldon
Edelweiss: Auerbach
God and Me
Nature Myths and Stories
Wallace: Abbott
Fables and Folk Stories
Seaside and Wayside.
Among the Meadow People
Abraham Lincoln
A Dog of Flanders: Ouida
The Boys of '61: C. C. Coffin
Gulliver's Travels: Swift
Graded French Method
French Prose Composition
Easy French Method
French Snytax and Composition
Causeries avec mes elèves: Sauveur
Le Premier Livre: Meras
French Reader: Super
French Life
Fasquelle's French Course
Complete French Course: Chardenal
Scientific German Reader
Deutsche Liede
L'Arabbiata: Paul Heyse
Erstes Buch: Berlitz
Buch der Lieder
Goethe's Egmont
German Composition
Bibles (four copies)
Edmond Dantes: A. Dumas
Count of Monte Christo: Dumas
America's Story: Pratt
Book of Golden Deeds: Yonge
Magnum Bonum: Yonge
General Geography
Schönberg Cotta Family
History of Romulus: Jacob Abbott
Europe: Carpenter
Stories of Woods and Fields: Brown
Longfellow's Evangeline
American History Stories: Pratt
Christmas Carol: Dickens
Story of One Hundred Years: Shepp
Mother Goose: Ella Dolbear Lee
Youth's Sunny Days
The Mammoth Story Book
Billy Whisker's Travels
Jolly St. Nick
Merry Times
This Year's Book for Children
Home Stories
Nursery Stories and Rhymes
Comprehensive Commentary on the Holy Bible
Illustrated Bible (large)
Thirteen bound Scribner's Magazines
Child's Life of Christ, illustrated
Geographies (three)

REQUESTS

1. Mrs. Elva Robinson, Marion, Va., asks for *So Big* or *Islona Orphan.*

2. *Tempest and Sunshine* and *Lena Rivers* are asked for by Miss Elah Jessup, Sandy Ridge, N. C.

3. Mrs. Clara Watson, Era, Texas, Star Route, will be glad of a correspondent. She lives off the

road in a very lonely place. She asks for reading for herself and husband, and cards for her three-year-old daughter, Kathleen.

4. Mrs. Laura Wallace, Boyd, Wise Co., Texas, a daughter of Mrs. M. J. Bond, a young housekeeper, is in a lonesome place where the church and Sunday school are inactive, and she craves letters and reading from the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

5. Mrs. C. L. Buckelew, Stratford, Okla., R. 4, a widow with several children, who has hard work to make both ends meet, will be very thankful for good reading.

6. Mrs. Lillie Church, Goodwill, W. Va., elderly and feeble, writes that it has been a long time since she has heard from any of our workers, and that she will appreciate reading.

7. Miss Eva Thomas, Polkton, N. C., R. 2, Box 47, thanks the friends that sent flower seeds. Many of the addresses were worn off, but she wishes the givers to know the seeds were much appreciated.

8. I am the mother of two children, the oldest a boy of six years, paralyzed and perfectly helpless. The other is a little girl five years old; so you see I am compelled to stay at home most all the time. It would be so much company to me to have correspondence with ladies from other places, and any good reading matter would be greatly appreciated. I would be so glad of story books and pictures or anything to amuse the little ones, and I would be very glad of any kind of scraps for quilts. Our pastor is Rev. Joe Hall, Mt. Airy, N. C. (Mrs.) Alpha Smith, Lawsonville, N. C.

9. A copy of the *Cheerful Letter* was sent me by Miss Effie Hall of Dodson, Va. I enjoyed reading it, and I see that the good friends of the paper like to cheer the lonely in many ways. I am sixty years of age, and my husband is seventy-one. We have no children. We lost all we had by fire last year in the town of Covington, Va. No insurance—we were lucky to get out with our lives, and only our night clothes on. Since then we are living with my brother in this state (Md.) in a rural district twelve miles from the railroad. I find it very lonesome. I enjoy making tatting, and any pretty designs for tatting or pieces of linen for centerpieces would be highly appreciated. I would also like to receive some reading matter—novels, short stories, any kind of literature. I take the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and when I am through reading it I pass it to a friend. My health is not very good, and hasn't been since the fire. My husband suffers a great deal from rheumatism. The shock and loss we went through left us both very nervous. Reference: Rev. Buxton, Covington, Va. (Mrs.) Josie Ostrander, Street, Md.

10. I wish to thank everyone who has remembered me. I am a widow, with one little boy living with me. I have had flu and pneumonia, and I am just now getting able to walk about. My boy also had the flu, and in some way it settled on his heart. He also had hemorrhage of the nose. I was so frightened, for it seemed he would die before we could get a doctor. When he went back to work in the field his nose began to bleed again. I feel so very anxious about him, he has always been a delicate child. Now, my dear friends, I will be so glad of any good reading, or quilt scraps, or anything that will cheer me along. I am afraid we can't have much of a crop this year, as there seems to be no one able to work, but I will put my trust in God, Who doeth all things well. (Mrs.) Victoria Dillon, Lawsonville, N. C., R. 1.

11. I want to thank the *Cheerful Letter* friends for past favors. I have eight children to care for. My husband got his leg broken two months ago, and can't walk a step yet without crutches. My health has not been very good for some time. I would be glad of any cheer, and quilt scraps of any kind, or knitting cotton will be greatly appreciated. (Mrs.) B. J. Hall, Dodson, Va.

12. Miss Blanche Coombs, Silt, Colo., R. 1, would be grateful for sheet music. Any kind would be appreciated.

13. Mrs. Bessie Kuykendall, Sherman, Texas, R. 5, asks for reading for herself and her husband.

14. I am a married woman, twenty-three years of age. I have three children, a boy of six and two little girls, aged four and two. I have been sick for sixteen months, and have been home from the hospital two weeks. Would appreciate books and quilt scraps so much, as I have to sit around; am not able to buy materials. Rev. J. R. Ingram (Box 275) is my clergyman, and Dr. C. F. Harris is my doctor. (Mrs.) Birdie Gould, Ansonville, N. C., Box 317.

15. Mrs. J. P. Puett, Lenois, N. C., writes: Please send me anything you have to read, especially the *People's Home Journal*.

16. The *American Magazine* is asked for by Ira E. Stepro, Mauckport, Ind.

17. Mrs. M. J. Roberson, Elamsville, Va., Box 32, who lives in the mountain country, would appreciate the following: A Bible with

large print, the *Pictorial Review* each month after some one has read it, and *Ruba Gordon*, if not asking too much. She wishes to thank all who have remembered her in the past. Without the dear *Cheerful Letter* friends we mountain people would be very lonely.

18. Mrs. J. E. Blevins, Crumpler, N. C., R. 2, Box 6, an elderly woman, asks for reading for herself and husband. The children are married and gone from home, so the old folks are lonely.

19. Mrs. Bessie Hartsog has moved (on account of her bad health) from McAlpin, W. Va., to Clifton, N. C. They lost their little home after the war, and since then have been dependent on public works for a living; this compels Mr. Hartsog to be away from home much of the time. They have four boys, aged from four to eleven years of age. She will appreciate any reading that may be sent, and will pass it along to friends.

20. Mrs. E. E. Morgan, Palmerville, N. C., will be glad to receive some good reading for herself, her husband, and her two boys, who are in the sixth and eighth grades. She is also interested to receive books for her neighbors and friends to read. Mrs. Morgan lives in a community which is quite destitute of reading. There is no library within reach of her or her people. She will be glad to receive books of poetry, history, and good fiction, for her own reading and that of her friends, and any good books for children. She is especially anxious to get some good books on psychology and religion. She will not object to books that may be worn or soiled. She gives as reference Rev. Grover C. Phillips, Bear Creek, N. C.

21. I am a girl nineteen years old. I live back in the western part of North Carolina, where the region is very sparsely settled. I like reading very much, and would appreciate any books or magazines. Miss Emma Brown, Joynes, Wilkes Co., N. C.

Changes of Address

Mrs. V. L. Davis (mother of Barnard), from Green Castle to Milan, Mo.

Mrs. Bessie Hartsog, from McAlpin, W. Va., to Clifton, N. C.

Mrs. Eva Collins, from Dotham, Ala., to Ashford, Ala.

Miss Lucy Wortinger is now at the Mennonite Home for the Aged, Eureka, Ill.

Mrs. C. E. Guernsey is at 1010 Lafayette St., Scranton, Pa.

Mrs. Nannie Staton has moved from Polkton, leaving no address.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD

GREAT, wide, beautiful, wonderful World,
With the wonderful water round you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast,
World, you are beautifully dressed!

The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree;
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the top of the hills.

You friendly Earth, how far do you go,
With the wheat-fields that nod and the rivers that flow,
With cities and gardens and cliffs and isles,
And the people upon you for thousands of miles?

Ah—you are so great, and I am so small,
I hardly can think of you, World, at all.
And yet, when I said my prayers to-day,
My mother kissed me, and said, quite gay—

"If the wonderful World is great to you,
And great to father and mother, too,
You are more than the Earth, though you are such a dot;
You can love, and think, and the Earth cannot!"

—*William B. Rands.*

THE DICTIONARY AS A BEST SELLER

MEMBERS of the American Booksellers' Association gathered together in Chicago the other day, and gave out the cheering news that more and better books were being read by the people. A great deal of questionable fiction is still being consumed by the reading public, but it was announced by the book sellers that the demand for books of travel, biography, history and science shows a steady increase. The reading public is growing larger in numbers and better in the quality of its reading, so say the men who cater to that public.

And the quickly popularized cross-word puzzle is hailed by the bookmen as furnishing a surprising development in their trade. It has quickened the demand for atlases and dictionaries to the point where the latter now enjoy the envied position of being one of the best sellers. That, indeed, is well, for one of the most glaring defects noticeable among our people nowadays is the inability to spell. If the cross-word puzzle can correct that defect it deserves a place along with the most valuable contributions made to present-day civilization. Let us hope that the fad does not fade.—*Memphis Commercial Appeal.*

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE 1924–1925

It is again the privilege of the secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to present her annual report. The chairmen of the nearby Branches, who are able to attend the monthly meetings held in Boston from October to May inclusive, are indeed fortunate. Here they gain much enthusiasm and practical help from others of the group. It is hoped that the accounts of these meetings, mailed to more distant chairmen, carry to them some measure of inspiration. The average attendance at the meetings has been fifty, and the average number of Branches represented thirty-eight. The November meeting was the largest, with sixty present. Fifty-seven different Branches have been represented at least once.

At each meeting, the chairman, Mrs. William B. Nichols, has presided. The example of her unlimited giving of time and effort has inspired many a member to attempt big things.

The Exchange has been unusually fortunate in having outside speakers address it. In November Miss Knight of the Evening Alliance told of a recent visit to an isolated district in the South. She carried her hearers to a strange land, where people lived in log cabins built before the Civil War, where families of fourteen children were considered small, and where "meat skins" (rinds of pork, crisped almost black) were esteemed delicacies by the children. She assured us that magazines, books, and letters were much prized there, and that anything readable was well circulated through the whole community.

In December Miss Annie F. Brown of the Lend-a-Hand gave a talk upon her three months' trip through the South, where she had promised fifty thousand children's books.

In April Miss Holman, the "friendly nurse" of Alta Pass, N. C., talked in an intimate manner about her work. She sketched the growth of her hospital, from its beginning in the rude shack left after the construction of a railroad, to the present modern building of eleven rooms. In a country where a large percentage of mothers were dying in childbirth, Miss Holman has delivered six hundred eighty without one fatality. She often teaches an intelligent mountain-woman the principles of simple home nursing, and thus makes her helpful to her whole community. In some such regions the appearance of a bit of looking-glass in a cabin means civilization, and the ability to write one's name intelligently, without any knowledge of reading, constitutes literacy. Miss Holman also spoke of what "cheerful letters" mean to these people, many of whom by the year at a time receive no other mail. Correspondence makes them important personages. She warned against taking too seriously the hard-luck stories that are often written by these people, whose outlook is so drab and gloomy that it is distorted. She emphasized their need of wholesome reading matter, and asked that any for her vicinity be sent directly to her, as she could distribute it to best advantage.

In February Mrs. Nichols went to New York City. At this time she visited several Alliances and carried to them practical suggestions for Cheerful Letter work. She brought back many valuable ideas as well. Her description of the way in which the committee of All Souls Church, New York, spends one day a month packing boxes impressed all. Under the leadership of the indefatigable Mrs. Brush they have prepared as many as ninety-three large packages in one day.

Libraries

Mrs. Stevens of the Library Department, during a visit to Knoxville, Tenn., was able to carry inspiration to a struggling Alliance there, where to be a Unitarian takes real courage. In her report Mrs. Stevens says, "In my heart-to-heart talk with the Cheerful Letter chairman in Knoxville, my conviction was strengthened that our work, although undenominational, is one of the strongest missionary forces of the Alliance and, in many cases, brings happiness and contentment into the lives of those who are giving, as well as those who are receiving. Verily, it is the friendly visitor."

In considering the achievements of the chairman of the Library Committee, Mrs. Stevens, your secretary cannot forbear a word of warm commendation; for 6532 books have been added to the number already in circulation, which more than doubles the number sent out last year. Twenty-four new libraries have been started this year, making a total of one hundred and fifty-nine. This growth has been made possible through the coöperation of forty-seven Alliance Branches. No one can measure the time and effort which Mrs. Stevens has generously bestowed in arranging for the placing of these books where they will do the most good. Besides, she has thoroughly revised her card catalogue, so that her record of libraries is complete.

The following extracts from Mrs. Stevens' annual report will give a better idea of the scope of her work: "Every librarian not heard from within this year has been sent a personal letter, containing questions to be answered. The answers tell of a deep appreciation of the love and service expressed through our endeavors. Many letters invoke 'the blessing of God upon the ladies of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, who have sent so much joy and happiness into lonely lives.' Another fact is evident; it is no longer sufficient to send just 'a box of books.' With the years of

work behind us, we are to-day assured of the progress of these people, who now ask for special books by special authors on special subjects.

"I must report that not all libraries still contain the original number of books. Some are worn out with constant passing from one to another; some fail to come back at all. One good soul in Virginia reports that she has only her Bible left, and she does n't intend to loan that—showing conclusively that bookkeeping continues to be a universal science! Anyone who has sent books will be glad to hear of the above condition, for it proves that the recipients are eager to use and enjoy what we freely give. An unused library would tell a different story. An important fact, which I hope will impress you, is the development of the character of library work. From being almost purely recreational, it has become highly educational.

"In many schools, from the struggling district schools to high, normal, and industrial institutes, and in community centres, our books are cared for in a home and used by teachers, pupils, and families alike. In Kansas a Cheerful Letter library has been used as a nucleus to establish a reading room. A room was hired, and members of the local club give two afternoons and evenings each week to the care and distribution of books. This has been going on but a short time, and a letter states: 'The interest already shown is surprising. People come from surrounding towns and even adjoining counties to get books.' There is a real community-spirit behind this, for money has been subscribed by citizens to pay the small rent for the rooms and to buy new books.

"To take you back to the last annual report, the library at McDaniel School numbers over 400 volumes, and is now awaiting inspection by the county examiners. The library at Wilmington, N. C., is fast becoming an important factor under the guidance of Mrs. Martin. In her earlier years she was a normal school student; now she is a strong ally of the high school near her home. She is able to direct and supply the supplementary reading required. She writes, 'To whom could I go but to the Cheerful Letter friends, for proper books for these promising boys and girls?' In August, a library in Tennessee was destroyed by fire, but it has been replaced by the Newburgh, N. Y., Branch. A request from Utica Institute for help for Negroes in Mississippi in reëstablishing their library that was totally burned, has opened up an interesting field of work. As a result, 972 volumes have been sent to this recognized school, which with 500 students does a wonderful work under the guidance of a Tuskegee graduate.

"Not all our libraries are in the South. The one in East Sumner, Maine, is extending its usefulness by sending a box of twenty-five books to an adjoining community. This box is exchang able whenever desired. In June a library w started in Van Buren, Maine, under the care o Unitarian young woman, who must be an i spiration to the town in which she lives. S has gathered the children into her home and teaching them, by her interest and influenc finer principles of living than they have ev known. Incidentally they are reading goo books. In July a library was started in Chest Vt., to be used through the Universalist Sunda School and the local Grange.

"Help has been given the American Mercha Marine in its appeal for libraries; the Rutla Sanitarium has not been forgotten; one hundr and twenty-five books have been added to t library at the School for Crippled Children Boston.

"Let me repeat that the work of the Cheerf Letter Exchange in its several departments *missionary*, carrying the message of love a service to all, regardless of race, creed, or color

HOME STUDY

Great credit is due Mrs. Sands, chairman the Home Study Department, who has develope its work so that seventy-three pupils are sendi regular monthly reports. Mrs. Sands hers writes: "These students include parents, r ceiving help on current events, and on the care children; young men and women, trying to be ter their conditions in life; boys and girls wi limited school opportunities. Two young f thers are taking regular lessons in English, hi tory, and literature, hoping to obtain better pos tions. A high school graduate is taking a cour in composition, planning later to write. young man in a Southern prison is studying bus ness English, in order to help himself, when h is liberated. Another young man, a cripple, ha been enrolled for three years. He started wit fifth-grade English and spelling, and is now doi advanced work. The constant help sent young teacher has enabled him greatly to im prove his school and to reach the whole com munity. An application for assistance has re cently come from a woman in Florida, who, afte ten years, is obliged to take up teaching agai She has no money for books or for a correspon ence course to prepare for her examination Books have been sent and a teacher supplie

"A young father writes: 'Excuse me if I d not send my lessons promptly. Some nights am too tired to study, but even then I can enjo the supplementary reading and magazines.' H works hard to support a wife and two children but looks to the Home Study Department to pre pare him for a better position.

"One mother, to whom copies of Angel Patri's talks are sent, writes, 'I understand m boys better now. I never could see, before what made them act so!'"

Mrs. Sands employs many ingenious devices in scattering knowledge. To each advanced pupil some first-class magazine, like *The World's Work*, is sent monthly. By judicious use of the articles therein contained, the study of many subjects is suggested. A biographical sketch of Joseph Conrad opens up a fascinating field of literature; an account of the solar eclipse turns the mind toward astronomy; an account of big-game hunting in Africa may mean biology, geography, and economics. It is evident that if eager minds so turned are to be led, books and yet more books are needed; so please send to Mrs. Sands not only the elementary school-books (of which she never has enough) but also books of biography and adventure, and standard novels in any quantity. Better still, volunteer to take a pupil. If you do not feel competent to undertake the teaching of an older one, it may be a small girl whose education can be broadened by the sending of educational puzzles like cut-up maps, or paper dolls representing people of many lands. Send her a worth-while picture, mounted on brown paper, and ask her to write you a story about it. When the story comes, correct the English of it, send it back, and your teaching will be under way in delightful fashion.

During the year Mrs. Hallett has sent twenty-four Bibles and four Testaments. Chairmen's reports show many others sent by individuals.

The "Cheerful Letter"

Miss Jones reports that the sunshine bags have again played their part in making it possible to publish the *Cheerful Letter* without a deficit. Their contents have paid for an efficient editor and have financed the enlargement of the paper. Mrs. Brush of All Souls Church, New York, again leads in the sum turned in by this means.

May your secretary urge that every chairman subscribe for and read the little magazine. It is the official organ of the Exchange. Its monthly column of appeals will almost always suggest a place where donated articles may be sent, and will frequently provide a permanent correspondent. Try also to interest your Alliance to take more subscriptions, which will make it possible for the increased size of the paper to be continued. Any extra papers can be sent directly from the publishers to people who are anxious to read the periodical but unable to pay for it, and whose names are on the list at headquarters. Let us each and every one strive to increase the proceeds from the sunshine bags. The following suggestions from the Medfield (Mass.) chairman may be helpful: ' I made bags (yellow, like our large one), and had one of my committee write and attach cards with the little verse. At our first Alliance meeting I gave each member a bag and asked her to return it the last of the year. It is surprising to see how much I got."

Branch Reports

In April your secretary sent to all Cheerful Letter chairmen listed in the Manual a request for annual reports. One hundred and twenty-three reports were received. It is a difficult task to tabulate the information so obtained, for many chairmen do not keep an accurate account of articles sent and refer to "barrels" of magazines or many packages of scraps. Undoubtedly many who sent no written account have been working faithfully all the year. So you may rest assured that the figures given below are far too small. It is gratifying to know that the record shows the sending of 103,062 articles, of which 38,681 were magazines. All Souls Church, New York, leads in the total number of articles sent, with the First Congregational Church of Providence a close second.

Perhaps Christmastide is the time when we Unitarians come closest to our distant correspondents. Who can imagine the happiness which our 754 Christmas boxes carried to families that otherwise would have had no Yuletide joy? Your secretary likes to speculate as to the number of people so reached. She knows that the fifteen boxes sent by the Hingham Branch contained gifts, plainly marked, for 169 different persons. At that rate, the Cheerful Letter Christmas went to a real multitude. Besides sending the conventional gifts, attractively wrapped (and beautiful wrapping counts for much), Christmas-tree ornaments, and bags of candy, workers displayed real cleverness in their tokens. The Cincinnati chairman writes: "Many members gave packages of new Christmas greeting cards, already stamped. Words of appreciation told that these were the first cards that many people had sent out for years." At this time the recipients of bounty expressed their thanks in tangible manner. Boxes of beautiful Southern holly, mistletoe, and nuts, bits of needlework and home-made candy found their way northward.

The methods employed by chairmen are diversified and interesting. Some work entirely by themselves, while others are aided by large committees. Some groups meet regularly, while others work separately. Some Alliance Branches make no appropriation for Cheerful Letter work, while others allow as much as $100 from the treasury. Chairmen use various means for raising money, such as candy sales at Alliance meetings, card parties, and entertainments in the homes of members, or appeals for help in the church paper. One energetic chairman raised $272.41 by such means. It is safe to say that there is scarcely an interested chairman who does not frequently dig into her own pocket book when money for postage is needed.

The number of regular correspondents varies from that of the Hubbardston Alliance, which still has only one, whom they designate as "Our

Katie," and who is the friend of them all, to groups of over one hundred. The chairman of the Ithaca, N. Y., Branch writes, "We are now doing something each month for the different members of the same family. 'Adopting a family'—the thought is intriguing. We shall try for school books for the boy soon."

Problems

Your secretary believes that the most satisfactory way to send magazines is to mail them monthly after they have been read, but she confesses that it is difficult to find people who will faithfully do this. The Branch at Wellesley Hills, Mass., excels in this, sending 110 each month. It is a pleasure to think of the families that enjoy this systematically distributed reading.

No secretary's annual report would be complete, which did not touch upon the problems of the workers. Begging letters and those telling of distressing conditions have been more prevalent than usual. In considering the latter sort, it is well to realize that there is hardly a family in one's own immediate acquaintance about whom a hard-luck story could not be truthfully written, particularly if the bright side of conditions were entirely suppressed. Therefore it is not hard-hearted to read wails that come, without believing them too literally. As for the begging letters—you have yourselves somewhat to thank for them, for every time that one of you, from the most altruistic of motives, breaks the rule and sends money or clothing, you encourage a flood of requests for similar things. In her annual report, the chairman of the Church of the Disciples, Boston, writes: "The old and disturbing problem of the inveterate beggar is never absent, nor does it become easier to explain kindly but firmly that we are not an organization formed to dispense hats and coats that Susie may fitly attend Sunday School, or Susie's mother make a creditable appearance among her neighbors. Although it is doubtless a great disappointment to be told that they must not ask for clothing, a good bundle of patchwork scraps goes far to ease the shock of denial." Any person who continues to demand material help may well be turned over to Mrs. Nichols, and dropped.

Fortunately the beggars are in the minority, although sometimes they loom up out of all proportion. You can be justly happy in most of your correspondents.

The second problem of the Cheerful Letter worker seems to be the unanswered letter and the unacknowledged package. Personally your secretary always encloses in each of her letters a self-addressed and stamped envelope, and announces the sending of a package with a double postal-card, the return part of which she self-addresses. She almost without fail receives replies, although they are sometimes long delayed. This fragment from a letter from Louisiana bears upon the subject, "It was thoughtful and kind of you to send a stamped and addressed envelope. There are two things that hinder my soul-development: the lack of stamps and c clean sacques in summer; and it does seem to m that life is one long stampede to get both. S put in a stamped envelope next time, like a dar ling, and I will tell you more things than yo have dreamed of in your philosophy." It i well to remember that if a few do not car enough to answer letters, there are many eage to take their places.

Some chairmen find places near home for dis pensing cheer. It is well worth while to visit the shut-ins in the neighborhood, and to take to ride old ladies who would otherwise not go out, a does the Reading (Mass.) chairman. North An dover and Cambridge First Parish (Mass.) each gave a program at the City Home at Christmas Many reports record reading matter sent to hos pitals, jails, and sailors' havens. In Canton Mass., the School Board has coöperated to the extent of allowing the chairman to have any dis carded school books that she can use.

Just what does Cheerful Letter work mean? Two Branch chairmen shall answer: "In our Alliance those associated with Cheerful Letter work are convinced that it is an opportunity to spread the Kingdom of God to all concerned.' "Such grateful letters as we have received far more than pay for any effort the work has cost.'

Two correspondents shall also bear witness. The first is an extract from the letter of a Virginia mountain school-teacher: "The package of books has just reached me here. We are very glad to get the Primary Plans. The children have only a few books, which have been read and reread. These will be new and interesting to them. Some of the children who have recently moved to the neighborhood have no books at all. So I am glad that your Alliance has not forgotten us." The last was written by a woman, seventy-two years old: "Let me thank you again and again for the nice scraps. My heart goes out for the Cheerful Letter people. May your days be long upon the earth, and your sorrows but few."

Respectfully submitted,
Ethel Lane Hersey,
Secretary.

To live is hard; and there is not one of us, I fancy, who has not again and again been tempted to despair of life when he has dared to look upon its dark mysteries; but again, there is not one of us who has not found a great sorrow, a great disappointment, a great trial, an avenue to unexpected joy.—*Canon Westcott.*

THE WATER-CARRIER'S FORTUNE

In the lovely land of Andalusia, in southern Spain, the town of Granada lies at the foot of a very steep, wooded hill, and at the top of the hill is a wonderful old palace. In that palace King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella lived more than four hundred years ago—the sovereigns of Spain who gave most of the money for buying and fitting out the ships in which Columbus and his adventurous sailors made the first voyage across the Atlantic Ocean.

Ferdinand and Isabella had not themselves built the palace on the hilltop; it was there before their day. Strangers from African shores had taken possession of that best part of Spain several centuries earlier, and it had been a desperately hard piece of work to drive them out. The Moors were people of great ability, better educated than the Spanish themselves, marvelously skillful in building castles and palaces, and particularly wise in certain kinds of work which we entrust to civil engineers—the planning of water supplies and the construction of reservoirs and fountains; moreover, they were fierce fighters, and they held on as hard and as long as possible to that beautiful district where they had meant to stay forever. But in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella they actually were driven away. The Moorish chieftain's splendid palace remained; indeed it stands on the hilltop to this very day, as beautiful as if it belonged to a fairy tale.

Some of the old legends and traditions about those strange, handsome foreigners especially seem to belong in a fairy tale. The Moors were not Christians, but held another faith of their own, and people believed that they did a good deal of their wonderful work by magic, with the help of unearthly spirits of one kind and another.

Many long years after the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, there was once a hard-working Spaniard named Peregil, who lived in Granada and earned a living for his wife and children by peddling water from house to house. There is a river running through the town, and busy house wives wash their clothes there; but the cleanest, coldest water for drinking is to be found in one of the Moorish wells in the ancient palace grounds far up on the hilltop. Every day and many times a day Peregil drove his donkey up the steep path, with two big empty jars hanging, one at each side of the donkey's lean back; then, when he came down with the jars full, he exchanged the water for copper coins at the Granada house-doors.

Very late one day—indeed, it was almost night—Peregil had climbed the narrow road and was about to fill his jars for the last time, when a stranger who sat on the ground beside the well begged for a drink—a queer old man in quaint, outlandish clothes; he looked just like one of the Moors of early times. Peregil had no love for Moors, but the poor fellow looked weary and forlorn.

"You have a donkey there," said the stranger, "and I am so worn out I cannot walk. I pray you, take me down to the town, for I cannot stay here under the stars all night."

Good-natured Peregil set his two big jars in a spot where they would be safe and put the stranger on the donkey's back; then they went down through the woods. But when they reached the streets of the town the stranger was so weak and so ill he could tell nothing about where he wanted to go. Peregil could not leave a sick stranger by the roadside; so, though he knew his wife would scold him for being too generous, he saw no other thing to do but to take the man to his own poor little home.

"You will ruin us all with your foolish actions," declared his wife. "No knowing how long we may have to feed a pauper! You have not a bit of sense in your head!"

Peregil made the stranger as comfortable as he could in so poor a house, but his wife need not have worried about the stranger's staying long. In the middle of the night the Moor called Peregil to where he lay on an old rug, and in a whisper told him to take a small box of sandalwood out of the folds of a very shabby old girdle. "It is a rich reward for your kindness," he gasped, "but you deserve it. Farewell!" And the stranger drew one last breath and died.

Of course, when gossiping neighbors heard about the Moor, there were endless questions asked, and very few answers could be given; for neither Peregil nor his wife had the least idea who the stranger was or where he belonged. All they knew was that he looked exactly as the old-time Moors were said to look. The mayor of the town felt that the case must be investigated. So Peregil was questioned sharply, and he had to tell the lordly mayor about the little sandalwood box.

"What is in the box?"

"Indeed, your honor, I do not know," confessed Peregil. "I have not been able to open it."

The mayor thought it might contain gold or jewels, and he insisted on trying all sorts of devices for opening the box. At last they discovered a way to slide one end out. But all it contained was a small piece of a candle and a strip of parchment on which were written some words in Arabic letters.

"That's no good," declared the mayor. "All right. I see you have gained nothing by the stranger's death, so you may go about your business." And Peregil went home to get his donkey and climb the hill for the water-jars which he had left among some bushes.

"All the same," said Peregil to himself, "I wonder what may be the meaning of those words on the parchment!"

After much thinking, he decided to show the strange writing to Juan, a merchant in the town who had traveled widely and knew seven languages. The merchant put on a big pair of spectacles and studied, and studied, and studied over the mysterious writing.

"It is a very old piece of writing," declared the merchant, "not like what Arab scholars write now. And the meaning is hard to reach. But it gives directions for saying certain mag words and performing certain enchantment which will open the way to a treasury of th Moors in some secret cavern under their palac on our hill, before they were driven out of th country. They expected to come back and re cover the treasure, but it waits there still, up be yond the well where you go every day. Luck fellow that you are! Of course you see I shoul share in the treasure, because it is only with m help that you can learn how to get at it. Yo agree?" *(To be continued*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, through the exchange of letter and by gifts of books and magazines.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of corre spondence with a teacher.

To give to those living far from church some of the helps which churches give. One good sermo or similar article is printed in each number. These sermons are never doctrinal, but present onl such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed on by all churches.

WHERE TO WRITE

1. *Letters paying for subscriptions to the paper,* fifty cents a year, should be sent to the Cheerfu Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payabl to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

2. *Letters asking for correspondents, for books, magazines, cards, etc.,* also *letters offering to giv books, magazines, etc.,* should be sent to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

See special suggestions under the heading of the "Book and Magazine Club" in this number

3. *Letters asking for help in studying at home* should be sent to Mrs. George O. Sands, Brimbl Ave., North Beverly, Mass.

The Home Study Committee has on hand a variety of schoolbooks which may be used by students either at home or in the schoolroom. The aim of the teachers is to help in any study where help is needed. Often this may fit a person for a higher grade of work.

4. *Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries* should be sent to Mrs. H. A. Stevens 26 John St., Brookline, Mass.

A Circulating Library will be started in any small community needing one, if proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references can be given. One hundred and fifty-nine libraries are now on our lists.

5. The Secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, Miss Ethel L. Hersey, Hingham, Mass., should receive the more general correspondence from workers on the local committees, or from others interested in the organization and its methods.

Only books of an instructive or wholesomely amusing character should be offered. Classics, educational works, and standard novels and magazines are always acceptable.

There is a large call for scraps of calico, gingham, and percale for patchwork.

THE RUMFORD PRESS, CONCORD